

# MCFRS Blazing Glory



## Message from Fire Chief Richie Bowers

Spring - 09 Edition

Be Ready                      Train, Train, Train  
Be Respectful                Work Together  
Be Nice                        Execute the Basics Perfectly

## Chief Bowers Swearing In Ceremony - May 19, 2009



## Confirmation of Richie Bowers to Fire Chief - May 12, 2009



May 12th, 2009 marked the County Council's confirmation of Richard R. Bowers as the second Fire Chief of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service. Chief Bowers stated:

*"Today I was confirmed by the Montgomery County Council as the Fire Chief for the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service. I am honored, proud and excited to have the opportunity to work for the career and volunteer personnel, and civilians of our combination system.*

*Over the next several weeks, I will be communicating my expectations, focus, and changes in our Organization as we move forward. The immediate short term goals are to move our Service forward and to make sure I get my troops, both career, volunteer, and civilian staff what is needed to be successful, and to connect with the community in an effort to prevent the 911 call from occurring!*

*Again, thank you for the opportunity to work for you and to serve as your Fire Chief! In the interim, maintain your readiness and continue to train, train, and train! "*



## Nomination of Richie Bowers to Fire Chief - April 21, 2009



"I am deeply appreciative, honored and proud that the County Executive has selected me to serve as the Fire Chief for the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service. I fully accept the responsibility to serve and protect the citizens of Montgomery County and my troops! "

Words spoken by Chief Bowers at the April 21st press event held by County Executive Isiah Leggett in which he announced Chief Bowers as his appointee for Fire Chief.

## Division of Operations

Steve Lohr was officially promoted to Division Chief, May 14, 2009, of the Division of Operations.



### Change is in the air

As the MCFRS pushes forward under the leadership of our new Fire Chief, I am reminded of the old FDNY ten-code ***“10-75”***;

***“All Hands Working, Doubtful Will Hold.”*** The entire organization is working feverishly to keep pace with the multitude of incidents, training, and other programs that enable us to be a high-performance fire-rescue organization. No one can dispute that we have grown rapidly in a very short period of time. In fact, some may argue that we have grown initiatives faster than our ability to effectively manage and control all of the things we do. Nonetheless, the needs to train, run calls, and take care of ourselves; maintain our apparatus, facilities and equipment cannot be understated or overemphasized. We simply must find new and improved ways to prioritize, organize, and manage our workload. Some days, we refuse to give in to change. Other days we embrace change. The late British Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill, captured this dilemma perfectly: ***“A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.”*** I challenge each of you to seek out every opportunity to do your best. When we do this collectively, the MCFRS soars. When we let ourselves get bogged down with the issues of the day, we struggle.

When I think about our collective experiences, some good, some not, as a whole, we do great work. In fact, thanks to the emphasis MCFRS has placed on training, personal skills, incident management, etc., we have recently had two significant incidents-Frederick Avenue and Twinbrook Parkway-where personnel were able to effect self-rescue from potentially career-ending or worse, life-threatening situations. I don’t believe that either of these outcomes were a coincidence. In fact, I believe that because we continue to focus upon difficult situations, because we are willing to open up the books and take a step back from traditional past practice, because we are willing to view change as opportunities, and not as difficulties, we are able to move forward successfully. My pledge to each of you is that we will maintain a system-wide operational focus, make changes when necessary to ensure effective operations, and above all else, we will always strive to protect the health, safety, and welfare of each of you in all that we do.

To help achieve the goals expressed by Chief Bowers, the Operations Division has made some changes and promoted several personnel. We welcome Battalion Chief Barry Reid to the Operations Executive Officer position vacated by the temporary promotion of Assistant Chief Scott Goldstein. Barry has hit the ground running and is supporting each of you every day, despite the stet grunts, groans, and noises emanating from his office. Scott (aka, “Radar”) has faithfully served the Operations Division as XO, and has set the bar high for all future XOs. His ability to receive, analyze, and process information is unparalleled. A special thanks to Goldy for welcoming me on board, his patience in bringing me up to speed. In his new position, Goldy has taken on the many challenges of the Special Operations Section recently vacated by Chief Mike McCarty, who faithfully executed two jobs for several months-Special Operations, and B-Shift DOC.



## Division of Operations - continued

Thanks, Mike, for two jobs well done, and welcome back to shift work! Assistant Chief Rich Holzman continues to excel in performing the projects and duties as the temporary Apparatus Section Chief. Three list Captains have stepped up and are serving in temporary Battalion Chief positions Dan Ogren (EMS), Brian Hagberg (3-B), and Jay Zuspan (5-B). Your efforts are noted and appreciated.

As we peek around the corner, more than a few things appear in the view finder. We need to keep our eyes on the ball and focus to achieve success. Among the ongoing initiatives we consider our highest priorities, in no particular order:



- Reopening the Safe Structural Fire Fighting and Mayday policies;
- Maintaining our focus on reducing call processing times and improving overall response times;
- Completing the 2006 Apparatus CIP project, (i.e. acquiring 17 EMS units, 8 aerials, 2 haz-mats, 3 heavy rescues, 39 CAFS pumpers);
- Simplifying the ECC call-type database, with the corresponding response plan simplification;
- Transiting to the Southlawn Central Maintenance Facility (CMF) with the business processes to support the field;
- Developing medic riding time policy initiatives that better serve the MCFRS deployment model;
- Improving Special Operations staffing, training and certification requirements;
- Reducing the high employee injury and vehicle collision rates;
- Devising Maintenance of Effort initiatives in a shrinking budget environment.



**B**attalion Chief John Tippet will be leaving MCFRS June 15, 2009 to join Chief Tom Carr and the Charleston Fire Department as Charleston's first Deputy Chief of Operations. His new position was created in response to a recommendation by the independent panel that investigated the tragic Sofa Super Store fire that occurred in Charleston on June 18, 2007 in which nine Charleston firefighters were killed in the fire. BC Tippet will oversee the Operations, Training, and Safety Divisions of the 300 member the Charleston Fire Department.

## Division of Operations - continued



BC Tippet joined MCFRS in 1974 as a cadet with the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department. He was then hired by Kensington in August, 1976, becoming the first 18 year-old hired in Montgomery County under what was then a new NFPA 1001 Standard.

John was promoted to Sergeant in 1982, and moved on to the Glen Echo Fire Department where he spent three years as a shift Sergeant, and was the first training officer for Glen Echo under that department's reorganization. He worked at Silver Spring Volunteer Fire Department for a year at "One Engine," and was promoted to Lieutenant at Sandy Spring. During his 2 ½ years at Sandy Spring's old Station 4 on Route 108, he juggled shift responsibilities with backfilling as the Senior Career Officer (or Captain, as it was called at the time), and handled uniforms and protective clothing for the 60-member department.

Shortly after the paid firefighters transitioned to County employment in January, 1988, John moved to his longest assignment as Station Commander at Station 12 in Hillandale, where he served nine years. During that period, he also worked on the 12<sup>th</sup> Floor, assisting with developing policies and procedures for the expanded DFRS, became a Level II instructor, started teaching at the PSTA, and joined MD-TF1 as the team's first Safety Officer. John was also a lead instructor of the High School Cadet Program for several years, and served as co-chair of the Career Officers' Association.

After leaving Station 12, John moved on to Station Commander assignments at Fire Stations 23 and 29 as part of the Department's consolidation of US&R assets. During this period, he was also a Shift Deputy Safety Officer for A Shift, and served on the Department's Apparatus Specifications Committee, eventually becoming its Co-Chair. John worked on the Department's Officer Candidate School, and helped develop the Crew Resource Management training that members receive in EMT Refresher. He was promoted to Battalion Chief in 2003, working three years in Battalion 3 before moving to the Safety Office in 2006. On the US&R side, John became Task Force Leader of MD-TF1 in 2004, and in 2005 was deployed to service with the group sent to Mississippi for Hurricane Katrina.

As he prepares to leave Montgomery County for new challenges in Charleston, John said his fondest memories will be of the dedicated people he has worked with, and the many lessons he has learned through the years. He wishes all the best to those in MCFRS.

## Division of Volunteer Services



Since January 1, 2005, the Division of Volunteer Services has been working closely with the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association to improve the communications and services provided to the volunteer members of the combination system. During this time, the Division of Volunteer Services developed a new County-wide volunteer data base called the “Personnel Information Management System” (PIMS). This tool provides valuable information to the MCFRS DVS Staff, as well as the LFRD leadership, to manage personnel membership information, LOSAP, volunteer benefits, pre-placement physicals, and annual physicals. This new program is expandable, and is scheduled for a significant expansion during FY10 to develop the Station Activity Tracker.

### MCFRS/LFRD Volunteers Grow in Numbers

In FY05, there were 874 active volunteers. In FY08, that number increased to 989 active volunteers. These 115 active members represent a 13.2% increase in 4 years.

In FY05, there were 1528 total volunteers. In FY08, that number increased to 1625 total volunteers. These 97 members represent a 6.3% increase in total participation.

FY09 also promises to be a year of increased volunteer participation as we have processed 405 pre-placement physicals, and 388 background checks.

### Volunteer Basic Orientation Class (VBOC)

The Montgomery County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (MCVFRA), under the leadership of Executive Director Eric Bernard, has developed and implemented an orientation program to assist new volunteers in quickly and efficiently being provided their necessary basic courses. This program delivers the standard curriculum over a 9-plus week timeframe, as well as assisting in getting the new volunteer fire and rescue members fit-testing, fingerprinting, and other requirements completed. This program is in its first year of existence and is already paying off in volunteer retention by providing a stronger identity for individuals working to achieve a common goal. Each of the classes has been filled and more than 30 volunteers graduated in May. These VBOC Students continue to interface with their home LFRD during the VBOC training period, which encourages the Local Fire Rescue Departments (LFRDs) to focus on the next steps when the orientation is completed. The MCVFRA Recruitment Committee, the Division of Volunteer Services, and the Division of Community Risk Reduction’s Recruiting Section are collaborating to ensure that this program succeeds.



## Housing of New Silver Spring Aerial Ladder Truck

The Silver Spring Volunteer Fire Department (SSFD) hosted a formal housing ceremony for their newly-acquired 100' Pierce Tractor-Drawn Aerial Ladder Truck on May 3rd. The unit was purchased by the SSFD with proceeds from the sale of its former historic fire station.

The unit pictured is 719; it will be relettered 701.



## Public Safety Training Academy Command Training Center

Our Command Development Center became operational in the Fall of 2007. The Center was designed to give Command Officers a venue enabling them to hone their skills and demonstrate command proficiency in simulated emergency situations. As airline pilots practice routine and non-routine flight situations in simulators, we now have the ability to practice large-scale and complex fire and EMS command situations in a similar no- risk environment.



Using fire simulation software, we can change views of the structure (front, sides, back, interior) and modify the smoke and fire conditions based on decisions made by the Command Officer. To date, we have conducted more than 250 Command Officer simulations with great success. Practice builds confidence, and good decisions made by a confident Command Officer will result in safer fire ground experience for all personnel.

## WARNING!!! NOT FOR THE SQUEAMISH OR THE FAINT OF HEART...

### *Every 15 Minutes* - Rockville High School



The Grim Reaper paid a visit to Rockville High School on April 23rd, when students and the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department participated in the “*Every 15 Minutes*” program.



For those unfamiliar with the program, every 15 minutes, someone dies as the result of an alcohol-related collision. The *Every 15 Minutes* program is conducted for teenagers and families around the world. The *Every 15 Minutes* program is staged each year at local high schools to coincide with prom season. The premise when this program was developed was that a person is killed every 15 minutes by a drunk driver. However, the statistics have changed - it's now about one fatality every 30 minutes, - but the program remains the same. The program is run by students at the County's high school, usually through its Student Government or Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) group, with the help of the local police and MCFRS.



Finishing touches known as “moulage” provides realism to are added to the victim above.



## Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce Public Safety Awards

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce 35th Annual Public Safety Awards Program was held on March 20 at the North Bethesda Marriott Hotel and Conference Center. Nearly thirty public safety workers received medals of valor and community service awards, thirteen of whom were firefighters. Before the event, Chief Bowers hosted a reception for MCFRS awardees and their families.



## Potomac River/Water Safety Demonstration

A water safety demonstration by the Montgomery County River Rescue and Swift Water Tactical Support Team was held Thursday, May 21, on the shores of the Potomac River where Metro area press representatives had the opportunity to take a boat ride on the Potomac River with MCFRS water rescuers. The media saw first-hand both the beauty and the dangers of the Potomac River and its surrounding environment, and heard about the hazards related to hiking challenges along the Billy Goat Trail from our expert rescuers. Montgomery and Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Service, Park Police, and other park officials addressed the media regarding the benefits of their coordinated response, and were told of the many public safety messages delivered in several languages by the multi-jurisdictional Potomac River Gorge Safety Group at an 11:00 a.m. news conference before participating the MCFRS rescue boat deployment.



## Community Outreach



Chief Bowers took time out of his busy schedule to read to the first graders at Rachel Carson Elementary School. Each child was eager to share their stories with the Fire Chief, one child citing that his smoke detector went off once but there was no need to worry, it was only his Dad's cooking that set off the alarm.



It seems as though Chief Bowers wasn't the only one who took time out of his busy schedule. Sparky was on the circuit, promoting fire safety and literacy at over 20 elementary schools. Students received information to take home to their families on smoke alarms, and how to make a home escape plan.



Pre-school and special education classes learned about fire, pedestrian, bike, and bus safety throughout the school year.

Also pictured, students at Jones Lane Elementary School after Sparky paid a surprise visit to them for lunch after students successfully completed the Risk Watch program.





## Grand Opening Ceremony for Germantown/Kingsview Fire Station #22



March 13th marked the Grand Opening Ceremonies for the Germantown/Kingsview Fire Station #22. The Germantown/Kingsview Fire Station is the first completely new fire and rescue station with expanded emergency service to be built in Montgomery County in over 25 years. The new station encompasses 16,150 square feet and has six apparatus bays, separate administrative and living spaces, private quarters, and support spaces. The one-story fire station is situated on a 3.9 acre lot, and its total construction costs (including land purchase) was about eleven million dollars. The photo below features the traditional “housing” of the engine.



### Did you know...?

Carlos (“Bear”) Bereciartu (Station 19B) was interviewed for the Spanish television channel Univision for a news segment preventing children from falling out of open windows in apartments and houses. While Company 19 didn’t understand a word he said, his performance on Univision was that of a true professional.





## Way to go Emilie!!



Emilie Crown, Program Manager for Montgomery County Fire and Rescue's Car Seat Program, was awarded the *Safe Kids Worldwide Superior Instructor Haddon Cup Award* at the opening session of the Lifesavers 2009 National Conference on Highway Safety Priorities held March 29-April 1, 2009, in Nashville, Tennessee. Emilie was surprised to have received this award in addition to two other instructors: Tomi St. Mars from Arizona, and

Vera Fullaway from Colorado.

According to Safe Kids, Emilie was selected because of her hard work and dedication, above and beyond simply being a dynamic instructor. Emilie started work on the project last fall, and recently completed an online continuing education presentation for certified technicians to obtain continuing education units (CEUs) toward recertification on the topic of safe transportation of children in other (non-passenger car) vehicles, including ambulances, airplanes, pick-up trucks, and law enforcement vehicles.

Emilie teaches six certification classes, three renewal classes, one Safe Transportation of Children with Special Healthcare Needs class and five update classes each year for the car seat program. She obtained her instructor status for car seat technician certification training in 1999, and is one of only two instructors in the state of Maryland for the Children with Special Healthcare Needs class. Emily has been a CSHN instructor since 2002.



## Recognize anyone??



1982: Banquet Station of the Year Award - those pictured include: Jim Dimopoulos, Ivan Rodbell, John Hanagan, Charles Courtney, John Gallo, Elmer Mockabee, Jacques Smith, John Pugh, Steven Pifer, Frank Gaegler, Dale Wright, John Feissner, Gary "Bucky" Mann, David Flowers and Wayne Courtney.

## Remember when??



1975: Wisconsin Avenue and Bradley Boulevard -

Carpet Land Fire



## PSTA - Driver Training Facility



Montgomery County Fire and Rescue has completed development of a new Driver Training Facility that includes a 75,000 square foot Skills Course, Skid Pan for evasive maneuver training, classrooms and offices, and a state-of-the art Driver Training Simulator. This new facility has been operational since 2008 and is located at 9710B Great Seneca Highway, adjacent to the main Public Safety Training Academy. Approximately 280 driver training candidates have completed 18 classes in Ambulance Emergency Vehicle Operator courses (EVOC), Class A, and Class B Apparatus Driving training since it opened.

The Facility Building houses training offices, several classrooms for didactic lessons, and a new Driver Training Simulator. The Simulator consists of 3 pods that accept ambulance and heavy apparatus steering chassis. Students in EVOC, Class A, and Class B driving courses are able to gain experience in simulated driving conditions before encountering real hazards on the open road. This simulated training environment allows students to develop their instincts and drive their “first calls” in a safe environment.

The driver training facility is also home to several retired Montgomery County ambulances, engines, and trucks that have a renewed mission in training our new vehicle operators.





## Major Events - Castle Boulevard Fire



Companies responded to a garden-style apartment fire on Castle Boulevard on the morning of May 2, 2009. Upon arrival, the first alarm units encountered heavy smoke and fire from the attic area. A second alarm was requested to support the operations to combat a rapidly advancing fire. There were five injuries, including one civilian.

## Lanier Drive



Fire broke out on the morning of May 17, 2009 at this house. The fire, listed as accidental in nature, was caused by an unknown malfunction or failure within the electrical system. The occupants were out of town at the time of the fire.

## MCFRS Promotion Ceremony - April 27, 2009

Chief Administrative Officer, Tim Firestine, along with family members of MCFRS personnel, enjoyed MCFRS' semi-annual Promotion Ceremony on March 27th at the PSTA. Those recognized were:

Shereen Blanton, Administrative Specialist I, Division of Operations, Apparatus Section  
Liberty Martin, Administrative Specialist I, Division of Administrative Service, Personnel  
Kevin J. Davis, Senior Supply Technician, Division of Administrative Services, Logistics  
Pauline Tenjani, Principal Administrative Aide, Code Enforcement

Battalion Chief Michael E. Leigh

Captain Craig Blue

Captain Kevin M. Devries

Captain Michael L. Glazier

Captain Edward T. Norris

Captain John W. Parsly

Captain Danny W. Selby

Captain Derrell Walker



Lieutenant Jason M. Allen

Lieutenant Jason D. Blake

Leutenant David L. Carter

Lieutenant John H. Emmons

Lieutenant Jason Giza

Lieutenant Jeffrey Kime



MFR Geoffrey Blain

MFR Stephen Collins

MFR Katherine M. Draper

MFR Jeffrey Fritz

MFR Joseph Fuller, IV

MFR Robert Furst

MFR Damian G. Langston

MFR James B. Lanham

MFR Thomas Lawrence

MFR William C. Macuch

MFR Anthony M. Mora

MFR Victor S. Strosnider

MFR Douglas C. Talley

MFR Corey A. Walls



## Proud Old Timers -

Message from former Assistant Chief Lenny Fitch:



For those of you who may not be aware of life after a career in the fire and rescue service, be assured we have a place for you as one of the Proud Old Timers (POTs). We meet a couple of times a year to stay in touch and update our failing minds on familiar faces. Of course, we wear name tags to help us remember those faces once familiar under a helmet or around the kitchen table.

About six of us first met several years ago in an attempt to loosely organize the retired personnel to stay in touch, other than at funerals. The only requirement for membership - you must have retired from the fire and rescue service. We began meeting in local restaurants, and as our numbers increased, we enjoyed the company of as many as 85 retirees attending lunch to catch up on the lives of those we had worked with and shared many years building relationships. We now have branches in other areas like Florida, where Jack Walters coordinates the POT retirees there. As our numbers have increased to over 300, Chief Tom Carr, and now Chief Richie Bowers, have hosted several luncheons. This has kept us in touch with current events in MCFRS. Thanks to Chief Carr, Chief Bowers, and the dedicated help of Linda Dowdy, we now have MCFRS breast pocket identifiers that we may wear on our suit coat or jacket and the availability of a MCFRS retired identification.

We have been blessed with the talent, dedication, and time-giving of Jim LaMay for keeping us in touch by screening and sending out through email the many notices we read routinely. Thanks to George Giebel and others for their input to Jim. Thanks also to Donna for sharing Jim's time and computer space, and thanks to Vince Bello, who is the backup email designee when Jim is out of town.

If you know of a retired MCFRS employee who would like to become a POT member, contact either Jim, Lenny, Linda Dowdy, or any one of the retired members and provide the person's name, email address, and telephone number so we can include them in Jim's gigantic data base.



Photos from the POTs Luncheon at That's Amore Thursday, May 21







On May 13th, the County Executive announced, Council's approval of the purchase of the GE Tech Building. The approval enables the County to create a Public Safety Headquarters, with co-located administrative offices for our Police Department, Fire & Rescue Service, First District Police Station, and the Highway Services and Traffic Engineering offices of the Department of Transportation.

Fire and Rescue Headquarters expected move will be around December 2009.

## Upcoming Events

Maryland State Fireman's Convention  
Ocean City, Maryland  
June 14-20, 2009

Firehouse Expo  
Baltimore, Maryland  
July 20-25, 2009

POTS Lunch at the PSTA  
September 23, 2009  
11:30 a.m.

## Line Copy Deadline Date:

August 15, 2009

Please submit items of interest to:  
[Fire.Chief@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Fire.Chief@montgomerycountymd.gov)

Contributors - Special Thanks to:

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